

The SPAB meeting was called to order on November 19, 2020.

Seyram Selase - Chair of the SPAB
Beverly Johnson
Brandon Folks
Elena Merriweather – Co-Chair of the SPAB
Catrina James
Danita Stapleton
Lauren Blanding
Carie Wimberly
Erin Burleson
Liletta Jenkins
Nicole Shine
Vandlyn Pierre
April Knight
Tommie Sanders
Maegan Ford
Shai Markris
Satavia Mann
Hanna Chandler
Debra Crook
Candy Gaff
Shereda Finch
Gloria Howard
Emi Ajero
Bruce Kimble - Secretary

Due to precautions related to the Covid-19 concerns, the SPAB meeting was held as a “ZOOM” online meeting.

Seyram Selase called the SPAB meeting to order at 10:00 AM.
Chair Selase Called for approval of the agenda to be Approved. The motion to approve was made by Vandlyn Pierre and seconded by April Knight. Chair Selase then called for the minutes of the last meeting of the SPAB. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Vandlyn Pierre and seconded by Lauren Stapleton.

The following updates were provided by Beverly Johnson - Director of the Office of Prevention:

ADMH hired a Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Maegan Ford.

Two grant positions coming open relating to the Promoting the Integration of Primary and Behavioral Health Care (PIPBHC) with AltaPointe – Program Manager and Data Entry Specialist.

Prevention Consultant Request for Proposal has been submitted and will be fulfilled shortly.

Ms. Johnson reported that the Legislative Liaison, Holly Carraway, has moved to the position of Community Mental Health Board, and Ms. Ada Katherine van Wyhe will be filling the post of the Legislative Liaison.

Ms. Johnson related that the Office of Prevention is currently working with the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), Over the Counter medicine safety project. Ms. Johnson reported that meetings were held in this regard of September 16th and October 20th.

The Management Steering Committee meeting for the Department of Mental Health was held on October 14th and the Opioid Overdose/Addiction Council Meeting was held on November 4th.

Ms. Johnson reported that she is a representative on the Alabama Child Death Review System, and that meeting was held on October 22nd.

Ms. Johnson reported that the Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board meeting was held on October 29th and 30th.

Ms. Johnson reported that the Quarterly Prevention Provider Meeting was held on November 12th.

Ms. Johnson reported on the CADCA National Leadership Forum. The dates for this forum have been confirmed as February 1st through February 4th (virtual).

Ms. Johnson reported that Alabama is scheduled to host the 2022 National Prevention Network (NPN) Conference however the 2021 NPN would also be virtual.

Ms. Johnson related that Opioid Prevention efforts, specifically the Community Engagement Subcommittee (a subcommittee of the Opioid Overdose/Addiction Council) is currently meeting monthly on September 11th, October 9th and November 13th.

Ms. Johnson reported that the State Opioid Response (SOR) 2.0 RFP has been released and closes on December 3rd.

Ms. Johnson reported to the Suicide Preventions efforts. Ms. Johnson went on to relate that a Suicide Prevention Network of Alabama is in place. Ms. Johnson reported that this network has held meetings on September 2nd, September 17th, September 23rd, and had a regional meeting on October 8th, as well as a meeting on October 22nd.

Ms. Johnson reported that the Alabama Commission on the Evaluation of Services (ACES) concluded exit meetings on September 2nd, with a plan review meeting on September 24th. Ms. Johnson reported that this evaluation was relative to the statewide priority of suicide prevention.

Ms. Johnson reported that the Office of Prevention attended the Suicide Prevention Conference, hosted by Troy University, on September 10th. Ms. Johnson reported that Lauren Blanding was a co-presenter at this conference. Ms. Johnson reported participation on the Suicide Prevention Advisory Board meetings on September 14th and November 16th.

Ms. Johnson related that the Alabama Department of Mental Health is involved in the “Governor’s Challenge”, to prevent suicide among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families. Ms. Johnson reported that the Department of Veteran’s affairs is the lead agency in relation to this effort. Ms. Johnson reported that these meeting were held on September 9th, September 30th, October 8th and November 3rd.

In the area of Mental Health promotion, the Office of Prevention has been involved in the Alabama Women’s Commission meeting. The Office of Prevention services has attended meetings in this regard on September 22nd, October 21st, and November 18th and identified this would be an opportunity to explore avenues to address the needs of women.

Ms. Johnson reported on the School-Based initiative, a partnership between the ADMH and local school based mental health. Ms. Johnson reported that she did a presentation to the local school-based mental health coordinators on promoting health and wellbeing, substance abuse prevention and mental health promotion.

Ms. Johnson reported that the submission of this Block Grant application was completed on November 18th.

Mr. Brandon Folks reported that there has been a considerable effort in relation to “Drug Take Backs,” with some permanent Drug Take Back locations. Mr. Folks called on Chair Selase to discuss some of these efforts. Chair Selase reported that, in relation to “Drug Take Back” efforts, a “gigantic” pill bottle that is circulating throughout Calhoun County.

Mr. Folks reported that there have been efforts regarding the “My Smart Dose” campaign. Mr. Folks related that this campaign was “geared” toward teenagers and young adults, focusing on sporting events. However, Mr. Folks reported that, due to the unique challenges that the Covid-19 crisis has presented, the Office of Prevention Services has been attempting to develop some alternative plans to meet these challenges.

Mr. Folks reported that the State of Alabama is expected to receive a no cost extension for the “Partnership for Success” (PFS) initiative, focusing on underage drinking prevention efforts in eight counties. Mr. Folks reported that some of the statistics exhibited an increase in “vaping,” rising from 17% to 20% between 2018 and 2020. Mr. Folks reported that the five-year evaluation exhibited a “return on investment” in relation to this initiative, for every dollar invested in this program, there could be a savings of \$23.00. Mr. Folks reported that, over the “lifespan” of this initiative, the state of Alabama could see a savings of \$17,000,000.

Ms. Johnson reported that the SYNAR, regarding underage tobacco use, report has been completed and has been uploaded to the system. Ms. Johnson reported that, historically the state of Alabama has been well below the “violation” rate. Ms. Johnson reported that the government requires a “violation” rate below 20%, and the state of Alabama has been below 10%.

Ms. Johnson reported on the PIPBHC funding opportunity. Ms. Johnson reported that there was a meeting in this regard on September 17th. Ms. Johnson said the Office of Prevention is currently working on this funding application process, which according to Ms. Johnson is due on November 30th.

Ms. Johnson called on Satavia Mann to report on the Adverse Childhood Experience efforts. Ms. Mann reported that there had been several efforts working with the Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect, as well as the Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers to provide a “one day” online training. Ms. Mann related that this training was held on September 30th, with a total of 395 participants, which included mental health professionals, educators, law enforcement professionals, as well as community leaders.

Ms. Johnson then called on Ms. Erin Burleson to report on technical assistance and workforce development. Ms. Burleson reported that the next workforce development training will be held on December 8th. Ms. Burleson reported that this training will cover alcohol, tobacco, prescription drugs, as well as SAMSHA’s eight dimensions of the Wellness Initiative. Ms. Burleson reported that Ms. Catina James will be covering evaluations. Ms. Burleson reported that registrations for this training will be going out this week.

Ms. Johnson reported that the Office of Prevention has the opportunity through funding from the Block Grant, to offer some training relating to health disparities through Auburn University. Ms. Johnson stated that the Office of Prevention has an additional \$44,365.00 for training through the Block Grant. Ms. Johnson proposed that the SPAB present some topics this board might see as needs to be addressed by this training opportunity. Some ideas that were discussed by the SPAB was training in the use of “social media” in outreach efforts and training of new staff in relation to environmental strategies.

Ms. Johnson called on the new Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Ms. Maegan Ford to introduce herself to the SPAB. Ms. Ford related that she is looking forward to working with the SPAB in the future.

Chair Selase called for Old Business. Chair Selase raised the question as to the issues of billing rates. Ms. Johnson reported that the SPAB had raised the question of an increase in billing rates. Ms. Johnson went on to report that the rates, implemented in relation to the Covid-19 crisis, will remain in place.

Chair Selase called for New Business. Chair Selase brought up the issue of SPAB elections. The consensus of the SPAB centered on postponing the elections until the Covid-19 crisis has passed.

Chair Selase called for provider updates. Hannah Chandler (CED Mental Health) reported that there have been some challenges her agency is facing. One of the challenges that was discussed was getting into the school system, in relation to the Covid-19 crisis. Ms. Chandler went on to report that her agency has secured a speaker for her agency, Chris Herring, former professional basketball player and current operator of recovery programs.

April Knight (Northwest Mental Health) reiterated the challenge of gaining access to the school system. Ms. Knight related that, at this point, her agency has not been given any access to the schools in her area.

Gloria Howard (Aletheia House) related that she has made several efforts in relation to the utilization of a virtual format in gaining access to the schools. Challenges to getting into the schools was discussed as an issue across the board. The question came up as to the monitoring visits, and plans that involve “going into the schools,” but were prohibited from doing so. Ms. Johnson stated that the Office of Prevention will allow alterations to the agency plans, that account for the unique challenges that are presented by the Covid-19 crisis. Ms. Johnson related that the Office of Prevention Services’ goal is to work with the providers to aid the providers with these challenges.

Shereda Finch (COSA) discussed some of the efforts that her agency is conducting regarding the use of virtual technologies, as well as partnerships with the schools and public television in her area to “get the message across.”

Nicole Shine (Pride of Tuscaloosa) indicated they are partnering with the community colleges, Shelton State specifically, in relation to the Community College Initiative (CCI) grant. Ms. Shine stated the basketball tournament has been a useful venue for these prevention efforts.

Co- Chair Ms. Elana Merriweather, addressed the SPAB with some efforts that her agency has been involved in. MAO hosted a “Test n Treats” event during the week of Halloween. Co-Chair Merriweather explained that this event involved “drive by” HIV testing, as well as disseminated both HIV and substance abuse prevention information. Ms. Merriweather stated that the MAO has continued to encourage drug take back efforts through the use of collection bins. Co-Chair Merriweather related that MAO is hosting a prep training for behavioral health providers that work with populations that are at high risk for HIV. Co-Chair Merriweather went on to report that the training is scheduled for January 20th virtual) and contact hours will be provided.

Chair Selase called for a motion to adjourn the SPAB meeting. The motion to adjourn was made by Gloria Howard and Seconded by Co-Chair Elana Merriweather.

The next meeting will be called for February 10th, 2021.

Respectively Submitted

Bruce Kimble MS LPC-S AADC ICADC-D
Secretary of SPAB